

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

March 23, 2010

The Honorable Gary Locke  
Secretary  
The United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20230

RE: MCNC's Round 2 BTOP Application

Dear Secretary Locke:

We are writing to express our support for MCNC's round 2 Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) application, and we urge you to make this grant to expand broadband coverage to some of the most economically challenged areas of our state and the remaining areas that lack middle mile broadband infrastructure.

MCNC's grant application proposes to deploy broadband to 21 counties in northeastern North Carolina, six counties in northwestern North Carolina, 10 counties in north central North Carolina, and 9 counties in south central and southeastern North Carolina. These counties once had thriving, robust economies centered on furniture, textiles, and farming, but economic development in these towns and communities has been stifled, as our manufacturing base has moved offshore. We must give these citizens the tools they need to drive economic development.

We can assure you that this proposal is the best way to accomplish full coverage of the broadband gaps in North Carolina and MCNC, an independent, non-profit organization, is well equipped to bring broadband to rural parts of North Carolina. The organization has gone out of its way to partner with the other major players in the broadband community as well.

We strongly believe that we must commit to ubiquitous broadband throughout our country to enable the technology-based economic development that will create the sorts of jobs and business opportunities necessary for the state of North Carolina and the country to be competitive in the global economy. Broadband accessibility is as important of a component in a community's infrastructure as water or sewer capacity.

As President Obama has said, "To build a economy that can lead this future, we will begin to rebuild America...It means expanding broadband lines across America, so that a small business in a rural town can connect and compete with their counterparts anywhere in the world..."

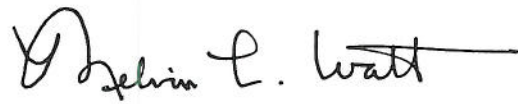
Funding MCNC's application to deploy broadband capabilities to 46 underserved counties in North Carolina will be a step towards realizing that goal.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Sen. Kay Hagan

  
Rep. Howard Coble

  
Rep. David E. Price

  
Rep. Melvin E. Watt

  
Rep. Sue Wilkins Myrick

  
Rep. Walter B. Jones

  
Rep. Bob Etheridge

  
Rep. Mike McIntyre

  
Rep. G.K. Butterfield

  
Rep. Brad Miller

  
Rep. Larry Kissell